

## A BIT OF BREAKFAST

Mrs. Sherwood Tells How it May Be Made Tempting.

## HOW TO COOK OMELETTES

Dry Toast That Would Be Relished by a Dying Anchoress—A Fashionable Breakfast.

[FOR THE SUNDAY HERALD—Copyrighted.]  
"And come to breakfast with what appetite you have."—Shakespeare.

Breakfast is a hard thing to manage in America, particularly in a country house, as people have different ideas about eating a hearty meal at 9 o'clock or earlier. In Europe, however, breakfast is a cup of coffee or tea in one's room, with perhaps an egg and a roll. Then to do one's work or pleasure, as the case might be, and to take the "le déjeuner à la française" at eleven or twelve. To most brain workers this is a blessed boon, for the heavy American breakfast of chops, steaks, eggs, forcemeat balls, sausages, broiled chickens, stewed potatoes, baked beans and hot cakes, good as it is, is apt to render a person stupid.

It would be better if this meal could be rendered less heavy, and always that the visitor should be given the alternative of taking a cup of tea in her room, and not appearing until luncheon.

The breakfast which most to be commended may begin with the omelette. This the French make to perfection. Indeed Gustav Drost wrote a story once for the purpose of giving this recipe. The scene is of a young couple lost in a forest, and they take refuge in a wood-cutter's hut.

"They ask for food and are told that they can have an omelette. The old woman had gone to fetch a frying pan and was then throwing a handful of shavings on the fire.

"In the midst of this strange and rude interior Louise seemed to be so fine and delicate, so elegant with her long gentle nose, her little black and white hair, and her eyes were fixed on the liquid butter, her arms outstretched, and she was holding her spoon a little, doubtless to increase her strength.

"It is a bit heavy for madame's little hands," said the old woman. "I will let the first time you ever made an omelette in a wood-cutter's hut, is it not, my little lady?"

Louise made a sign of assent without removing her eyes from the frying pan.

"The eggs! the eggs!" she cried all at once, with such an expression of alarm that the old woman, who was holding the eggs, said: "The butter is bubbling. Quick! quick!"

The old woman was beating the eggs with animation. And the herbs, she said, "And the bacon and the salt," said the young man. Then we all set to work chopping the herbs and cutting the bacon, while Louise cried: "Quick! quick!"

At last there was a big splash in the frying pan, and the feast had begun. We all stood around the fire watching anxiously, for, each having

HAD A FINGER IN THE PIE, the result finished us all. The good old woman, kneeling down by the dish, lifted up with her knife the corners of the omelette, which was beginning to brown.

"Now madame has only to turn it," said the old woman. "A little sharp jerk," said the old man. "Not too strong," said the young man. "One jerk! one jerk!" said Louise. "He is quick, madame!" said Louise. "If you shall never dare, besides it is very heavy, you know—"

"One little sharp jerk." "But I cannot—it will go into the fire!"

In the heat of the action her head had fallen; she was red as a peach, her eyes glittered and in spite of her anxiety she burst out laughing. "To fry good, Louise, some effort, the frying pan executed a rapid movement and the omelette rolled, a little heavily, I must confess, on the large plate which the old woman held.

"Now we have a finer looking omelette," this is an excellent description of the dish, which is made for us at every little cabaret in France, as well as at the best hotels.

That dexterous turn of the wrist by which the omelette is turned over is, however, hard to reach. Let us try it. It has been taken into a kitchen in a hotel in the Riviera to see a cook who was so dexterous as to turn the frying pan over entirely without spilling the omelette.

However, they are numerous the omelette family—plain and with parsley, the fancy omelette and the creamy omelette. Learn to make every sort from any cooking book and your family will never starve.

Conquer the art of toasting bacon with a fork. It is a fine relief for your eye, no matter how cooked, to fry good. Indeed, bacon in a pan until it is hard to disfigure one of fortune's best gifts. Study above all things to learn

HOW TO PRODUCE GOOD TOAST.

Not all the cooks in the great kingdom or empire or republic of France (whatever it may be at this time) make a good slice of toast. They call it "pain rôté," and well they may, for after the poor bread has been burned they put it in the oven and roast it. No human being can eat it. It is taken away and grated up for sawdust.

They make delicious toast in England and in a few hours in America. The bread should be a little stale, the slices cut thin, the fire perfect, a toasting fork should hold it before the coals, which are as bright as Jupiter's shins, so that a delicate brown, dropped on a hot plate, fresh butter put on at once, and then—

"'Tis tempt the dying anchoress to eat." Then comes cream, salt, and there is an excellent breakfast. "Brown bread," which is delicious toasted and boiled in milk.

Muffins are generally failures in these United States. What after conquering the English, we cannot conquer their muffins, I do not know. They are well worth repeated efforts.

We make up our hot biscuits and rolls, and as for our waffles, griddle cakes and Sally Luns, we distance competition.

Do not believe that they are unhealthy! Nothing which is wholesome is healthy to everybody and all things which are good are unhealthy to somebody. Everyone must determine for himself what is healthy and unhealthy.

A FOREIGN BREAKFAST IN FRANCE consists of eggs in some form or another, frequently on toast, which is buttered, a little vinegar and allowed to brown, a stew of vegetables and meat, a little cold meat, tongue, ham or cold roast beef, a very good salad, a small dish of stewed fruit, or a little pastry, coffee, fruit and coffee, and always red wine.

Or perhaps an omelette or egg "à la plate" simply dropped on a hot plate, mutton cutlets and fried potatoes, perhaps a pigeon, with spinach or green peas, or trout from the lake, followed by a beef-steak with highly flavored Alpine potatoes, berries or fresh apricots or figs; then all eating is done for the day until 7 o'clock dinner.

This is of course the middle "le déjeuner à la française," at the earlier breakfast a Swiss hotel offers only coffee, rolls, butter and honey. And this is quite enough. For breakfast all sorts of "stews"—kidney, chicken, veal and beef—are good, and every sort of little pan fish. In our happy country we can add the oyster stew, or the

lobster cream, the familiar sausage and the hereditary hash. If anyone knows how to make good corned beef hash, she need not fear to enter a king.

There are those who know how to broil a chicken, but they are few. "Amongst the few, the immortal names, which are not born to die."

There are others, also few, who know how to broil ham, so that it will not be hard, and on it to drop the egg so that it be like Saturn, a golden ball in a ring of silver.

AMONGST THE GOOD DISHES and cheap dishes which I have seen served in France for a breakfast, I recommend lamb's feet in a white sauce, with a supple onion sauce.

All sorts of fritances and warmed over things can be made most deliciously for breakfast; many people like a salt mackerel or cold herring for breakfast; these are good "savant gouts," stimulating the appetite.

The Danes and Swedes have every form of dried fish, and even some dried meat, in this way. Dried beef served up with eggs is comforting to some stomachs. Smoke salmon appeals to others, and people with an esthetic digestion like trout or Woburn mackerel. The fish of our forefathers is a supreme delicacy if well made, as is warmed codfish.

But warmed over pie or creamed over mutton or beef are detestable. The appetite is in a paroxysm at 9 o'clock and needs to be tempted; a bit of breakfast bacon, a bit of toast, an egg, and a fresh slice of mutton or a sliced tomato in summer, or, as the French say, begin with the mutton or a plate of strawberries. These early breakfasts at 9 o'clock may be followed by a cold cut, but not on the "déjeuner à la française," which with us becomes luncheon, demands another order of meal, as we have seen, more like a plain dinner.

It is a great comfort to the housekeeper or the lady who has been impatient to see the tea and coffee pot to serve thence a large family, to sometimes escape and have both tea and coffee served from the side tables.

Of course for small and intimate breakfast, there is nothing like the "steaming urn," and the tea made by the lady at the table, and Hon. Thomas H. Benton declared that he "liked to drink his tea from a cup, which had been washed by a lady."

WOMAN IS THE GENIUS OF THE TEA KETTLE. To make a good cup of coffee is a rare accomplishment. Perhaps the old method is as good as any: A small cupful of roasted and ground coffee, one-third Mocha and two-thirds Java, a small egg shell and all broken into the pot with a coffee stirrer, well with a spoon and then pour on three cups of boiling water; let it boil from five to ten minutes, counting from the time it begins to boil; as soon as it has boiled enough pour in a cupful of cold water and turn a little of the coffee into a cup to see that the nozzle of the pot is not filled with grounds. Turn the boiler and let the coffee stand a few minutes to settle, taking care that it does not boil again. The advantage of boiled coffee with coffee is that the yolk gives a rich flavor and a good color; also the shells and the white keep the grounds in order, settling them at the bottom of the pot.

But the most economical and the easiest way of making coffee is by filtering. The French coffee origin should be used. It consists of two cylindrical tin vessels, one sitting inside the bottom of the upper being a fine strainer.

Another coarser strainer with a rod coming from the center is placed on this. Then the coffee, which has been finely ground, is put in and another strainer is placed on top of the rod. The boiling water is poured on and the pot set where it will keep hot, but not boil, until the water has gone through. This will make a clear, strong coffee with a rich, smooth flavor.

The advantage of the two strainers is that the one coming next to the fine strainer prevents the grounds from filling up the fine holes, and so the coffee is clear—a great desideratum. Boiled milk should be served with coffee for an early breakfast. French coffee is served after dinner, and in France, always after the 12 o'clock breakfast.

For a 9 o'clock breakfast the hostess should have a small cup of perhaps chocolate, if she has a large family of guests, as we cannot drink coffee for breakfast.

THE FINEST, "LA POULTE," find favor in Paris and are delicious as prepared there. Also calf's liver à l'Alsacienne. Chicken livers are very nice, and cod's tongues with black butter cannot be surpassed. Mutton kidneys with bacon are desirable, and all the livers, and kidneys, and broiled steaks and chops are always served for breakfast. The griddle made St. Lawrence fit for heaven and its qualities have been elevating and refining ever since.

The summer breakfast can be very nice. Crab, chicken, lobster—all are admirable. French coffee should be served whenever one can get it—near the sea, always.

The deviled kidneys and broiled bones do for supper; but fresh fish and easily digested food should replace these heavier dainties for breakfast.

Stewed fruit is much used on the continent at an early breakfast. It is thought to avert dyspepsia. Americans prefer to eat fruit fresh, and therefore have not learned to stew it. Stewing is, however, a branch of cooking well worth the attention of a housekeeper. It makes canned fruit much better to stew it with sugar. Stewed cherries are delicious and very healthy, and all the berries, even if a little stale, are good. In a good kitchen, as can dried fruits like prunes, etc. Stewed pears make

AN ELEGANT DESSERT served with cream whipped, but this is too rich for breakfast. Baked pears with cream are sometimes ordered. And eggs in every form—scrambled, dropped, boiled, stuffed and even boiled hard, sliced and dressed as a salad. What is so good as an egg salad for breakfast? A good hostess in the Adirondacks who had nothing else to offer! Eggs are the staple for breakfast.

It is better to eat a saucer of cream and cream at 9 o'clock, take a cup of tea and do one's work.

Then at 12 sit down to as good a breakfast as possible, a regular déjeuner à la française, with a great deal of coffee, the brain after several hours' work, needs repose, and at 2 or 3 o'clock go to work again like a glutton refreshed.

In summer, when foreign doctors do not go to good for children to have an early breakfast with meat. But in France they give children wine at a very early age, which is rarely done in this country. At all boarding schools and hospitals wine is given to young children. Certainly there are fewer drunkards and fewer dyspeptics in France than in America.

BRILLIANT SAYINGS OF COFFEE: "It is beyond doubt that coffee acts upon the functions of the brain as an excitant." Voltaire on coffee and Bacon's great deal of coffee. But if it deprive persons of sleep it should be taken. It is to many a poison, and hospitals are full of men made crazy by the insomniac stimulant of coffee. The Spanish people live and flourish on chocolate, introduced into Spain during the seventeenth century; it crossed the Pyrenees, whence Anne, Austria, daughter of Philip II., and wife of Louis XIII., and at the commencement of the reign was more in vogue than coffee.

Many modern writers advise a good cup of chocolate at breakfast as wholesome and easily digested, and that it is good for clergymen, lawyers and travelers.

But in America it is considered heavy and heady; and debilitates the clergymen, lawyers and travelers. It has something to do with this. Cocoa and the lighter preparations of chocolate are healthy at sea, and very comforting to those who find their service too much on the alert to stand coffee or tea.

Everyone must consult his own health and taste in this as in all matters. The boldest attempts to increase

the enjoyment of the palate, or to tell people what they shall eat or drink, are constantly overthrown by some subtle enemy in the stomach; and breakfast should especially be so light, that they

can tickle the palate without disturbing the brain. A red herring is a good appetizer.

"Meet me at breakfast alone, And then I will give you a dish Which really deserves to be known. Though 'tis not the gentlest of fish, You must promise to come, for I said A splendid not terrible I'd buy. Nay, turn not aside your proud head, You'll like it, I know, when you try."

"If moisture the herring betrays, Drain till from the moisture 'tis free, Warm it through in the usual way. Then serve it for you and for me. As a breakfast it is not good, To rub it when ready 'tis best; Egg sauce and potatoes don't spare, And the flavor will cause you surprise."

Yes, and pleasure. It is not the man who had eaten a heavy supper the night before; it is not the heavy drinker (although brandy and soda is not the best of appetite provokers, so they say); but it is also the brain worker who finds it impossible to eat in the morning. For sleep has the effect of eating. "Who sleeps, eats," says the French proverb; and we often find healthy children unwilling to eat an early breakfast. Appetites vary both in individuals and at various seasons of the year. Nothing can be more unwise than to make children eat when they do not want to do so. During the summer months we are all of us less inclined for food than when sharp set by hard exercise in the frosty air we find an appetite, but we loathe in July what we like in January.

THE HEAVY DOMESTIC BREAKFAST of steak and mutton chops in summer doubtless afflicts a delicate child, even to look at it. The perfection of good living is to have what you want exactly when you want it. A slice of fresh mutton, a plate of strawberries, a thin slice of bread and butter, may be much better for breakfast in summer than the baked beans and stewed codfish of a later season. Do not force a child to eat even a baked potato if he does not like it.

It is mentioned by some that a strong will can keep off sea-sickness or any other malady. This is a fallacy. No strong will can make a delicate stomach partake of a heavy breakfast at 9 o'clock. There is a morbid forcing of danger.

Therefore we begin and end with the same idea: "Breakfast is a hard thing to manage in America."

But in England it is a very happy-go-lucky meal; and although the essential are on the table people are privileged to rise and help themselves from the sideboard. I may say that I have never seen a fashionable English household at a 9 o'clock breakfast, although the meal is always ready for those who wish it.

For sending breakfasts to rooms, a tray is prepared with teapot, sugar and cream, a plate of toast, eggs, boiled (with cup, spoon, salt and pepper), a little pat of butter, and if desired, a plate of chops, or chicken, plates, knives, forks and napkins. For an English country house the supply of breakfast trays is like that of a hotel.

The pretty little *Salmagundi* sets, of small teapot cream jug and sugar bowl, are favored.

When breakfast is served in the dining-room, a white cloth is generally laid, although some ladies prefer variously colored linen, with breakfast, so that the servant must watch the decision of the guest.

A grand breakfast to a distinguished foreigner, or some great home celebrity at Delmonico's for instance, would be:

A table loaded with flowers, Oysters on the half shell. Chablis. Eggs stuffed. Eggs in black butter (au beurre noir). Chops and green peas. Lyonnaise potatoes. Champagne. Sweetbread. Partridges. Woodcock. Salad of lettuce. Claret. Chicken fondue. Dessert. Charlotte Russe. Ice. Fruit Jelly. Grapes. Peaches. Pears. Coffee.

A breakfast even at 12 o'clock is thus made noticeably lighter than the meal called lunch.

It may be introduced by clam juice in cups, or bouillon, but is often served without either.

These breakfasts are generally prefaced by a short reception, where all the guests are presented to the foreigner of distinction.

There is no formality about leaving. Indeed these breakfasts are given in order to avoid that.

For an ordinary breakfast at 9 o'clock in a family of ten, we should say that the menu should be something as follows:

THE HOST AND HOSTESS being present, the lady would make the tea. Oatmeal and cream would then be offered; after that a broiled chicken would be placed before the host, which he would eat. An omelette is placed before the lady or passed; stewed potatoes, toast or muffins are on the table. Hot cakes finish up this breakfast, unless fruit is also added.

It is considered a very healthful thing to eat an orange before breakfast.

But who can eat oranges well? One must go to Spain to see that done.

The Seniors take up the ring with their silver knife. Then putting her knife into the peeled fruit she gently detaches small slices from the pulp, leaving the core and untouched; passing the fork forward, she detaches every morsel with her pearly teeth, looking very pretty in the while, and contrives to eat the whole orange without losing a drop of the juice, and lays down the core with the fork still in it.

It seems hardly necessary to say to an American lady that she should be neatly dressed at breakfast.

The pretty white morning dresses which one sees in America are rarely seen in Europe. Perhaps it is the difference of climate. In England elderly ladies and young married women sometimes appear in very smart tea gowns of dark silk over a collar, but almost always the young ladies come in the yachting or tennis dresses, which they will wear until dinner; and almost always in summer in hats. In America the variety of morning dresses is endless; perhaps the dark jacket over a white vest, the serviceable merino, the flannel, the dark foulards, are the favorites.

It is thought by foreign doctors, and so properly made as to rival all the other costumes for coquetry and grace.

"Still to be neat, still to be dressed as she were going to a feast."

Such should be the breakfast dress of the young matron. It need not be fine; it need not be expensive; but it should be neat and becoming. The hair should be carefully arranged, and the feet either in good stout shoes for the subsequent walk, or in the natty stocking and well-fitting slipper which has moved the poet to such feeling verses.

M. E. W. SHERWOOD.

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